

control society, was the inevitable consequence. But the last result was long delayed. * In the sixteenth century, whatever the political conditions, the claim of the Calvinist Churches is everywhere to exercise a collective responsibility for the moral conduct of their members in all the various relations of life, and to do so, not least, in the sphere of economic transactions, which offer peculiarly insidious temptations to a lapse into immorality.

The mantle of Calvin's system fell earliest upon the Reformed Churches of France. At their first Synod, held in 1559 at Paris, where a scheme of discipline was adopted, certain difficult matters of economic casuistry were discussed, and similar questions continued to receive attention at subsequent Synods for the next half-century, until, as the historian of French Calvinism remarks, "they began to lax the reins, yielding too much to the iniquity of the time."^{7g} Once it is admitted that membership of the Church involves compliance with a standard of economic morality which the Church must enforce, the problems of interpretation which arise are innumerable, and the religious community finds itself committed to developing something like a system of case law, by the application of its general principles to a succession of varying situations. The elaboration of such a system was

undertaken; but
it was limited in the sixteenth century both
by the comparative simplicity of the economic
structure, and
by the fact that the Synods, except at
Geneva, being
concerned not to reform society, but merely
to repress
the grosser kinds of scandal, dealt only
with matters
on which specific guidance was demanded
by the
Churches.

Even so, however, the riddles to be
solved were not
a few. What is to be the attitude of the
Churches
towards those who have grown rich on ill-
gotten wealth?
May pirates and fraudulent tradesmen be
admitted to
the Lord's Supper ? May the brethren trade
with such